

FEB 27 1988

# *Celebrate The Forum!*

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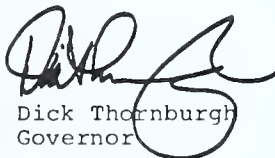
GREETINGS:

The renovation of the Forum and the near-by Green Room, as well as the acquisition of a new Baldwin concert-grand piano, mark an exciting example of public-private partnership in the Capitol City.

I know that both Commonwealth employees and citizens from throughout the Harrisburg area appreciate these outstanding facilities and look forward to many hours of enjoyment in the "new" Forum.

Congratulations to all who helped to bring this project to fruition.



  
Dick Thornburgh  
Governor

September 23, 1986

## Dear Friends:

It is our honor and pleasure to welcome you to this historic occasion which is truly a cause for celebration. We look forward with anticipation to tonight's inaugural recital on the Forum's beautiful new Baldwin concert grand piano, and we are thrilled that the much-acclaimed Theodore Lettvin, who has delighted Harrisburg audiences in the past, is here as our pianist. A program has been selected that is certain to please the ear and fully inaugurate the keyboard!

We also celebrate the Forum itself, for today marks the end of a project and the beginning of an era. Five years ago, the Pennsylvania Department of General Services embarked on a comprehensive program to renovate and re-equip the Forum, which after 50 years had become something of a white elephant. It is significant to note that financial, technical and moral support was generously provided by community members, many of whom are here tonight. Their knowledge and guidance assured the complete success of this undertaking, which culminated this month with the arrival of a much-needed new piano.

Today, the Forum is once again a vital and valuable community resource, contributing in countless ways to the richness of our public life. Because both our Commonwealth and our Capital City are leaders in recognizing the importance of the arts, it is no accident that the renaissance of this Forum has paralleled the achievement of new milestones by our arts organizations and our governmental institutions. We celebrate those milestones, and we celebrate the great partnership of government and its citizenry which brought them to fruition.

The Forum thus embarks on a new season that is unprecedented in the quality of entertainment and the illustriousness of personalities to be presented. Such a glorious moment could not have been reached without the enthusiastic involvement of countless good citizens — behind the scenes, on committees; in the audience and even on the stage — not only tonight but over the years.

What can be said to all of you but *“thank you and encore!”*

Walter and Irene Baran                      John and Beth Neidel  
Co-chairmen, Forum Celebration Committee

## About the piano . . .

The Forum's new Baldwin SD-10 Concert Grand Piano is the latest in a long line of outstanding pianos from the Baldwin Piano and Organ Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1862, music teacher Dwight Hamilton Baldwin and inventor John Warren Macy designed a series of pianos that set an unusually high standard of excellence. Baldwin gained instant international recognition by becoming the first American piano to earn the Grand Prix of both the prestigious Paris Exposition (1900) and the St. Louis World's Fair (1904).

Today, Baldwin pianos continue to maintain their preeminence in quality, performance, and innovation. The SD-10 concert grand has been heralded as the first major advancement in piano design in many years and received major news coverage upon its introduction.

Evidence of Baldwin quality is also offered by the many music organizations and artists using Baldwin pianos, including the Boston Symphony and Pops Orchestras, Jorge Bolet, Dave Brubeck, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein, Ferrante and Teicher, John Williams, the Aspen Music School and Festival, Liberace, Aaron Copland, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Billy Joel, George Shearing, and the Philadelphia Orchestra.



*John Neidel, at keyboard, and Wally Baran personally inspect the new Baldwin concert grand piano upon its delivery to the Forum.*



# The FORUM: More Stars Than M-G-M

by David J. Morrison

Like the well-rounded musician who can play any instrument and is frequently called upon to do so, the State Capital Forum has enjoyed a 55-year public career that is unmatched by any other public space in Pennsylvania.

Since its first engagement on November 24, 1931, when the Wednesday Club presented the Don Cossack Russian Male Chorus, the Forum has raised its curtain to an unending procession of amateur and professional performers, motion pictures, governmental conferences, snowbound inaugurations, municipal ceremonies, high school commencement exercises, religious pageants, business and sales seminars, political debates, exercise classes and more. Thousands of Central Pennsylvanians can recall at least one special moment when they appeared before a Forum audience, the accumulation of which now numbers in the millions of people.

The Harrisburg Symphony, which has been the Forum's orchestra-in-residence since the hall opened, has supplemented its own fine music with guest artists of the highest international calibre. Other Harrisburg organizations, including the Wednesday Club Concert Association, the Patriot-News Company, Yeshiva Academy and the Harrisburg Singers, have either performed or sponsored presentations in virtually every branch of the performing arts. Groups such as the Junior League have enriched the community's exposure to academia and current affairs through the presentation of distinguished visiting lecturers. The list quickly dispels any notion that nothing happens in Harrisburg!



*The Forum, from Walnut Street in Harrisburg*

Billed as “the Singing Horsemen of the Steppes” and “Europe’s most sensational drawing card,” the Don Cossacks performed in an event described as “a rare musical treat as well as a lovely opening event for this impressive auditorium.” Comprised of 36 former officers of the Russian Imperial Army, the Czarist expatriates were on their first American tour, and their Harrisburg appearance occurred shortly after four initial concerts at Carnegie Hall.

Even their familiarity with the glittering palaces and opera houses of the Romanovs could not deter the Don Cossacks from proclaiming the Forum hall “one of the most beautiful in the world.” Countless well-traveled celebrities since then have agreed with that assessment, some interrupting their performances to expostulate on the Forum’s overwhelming interior.

Planned as a major component of the original Education Building, the Forum, according to the April 1932 edition of *Architectural Record*, was designed, as the name implies, “so that there could be free discussion not only from the stage but from any part of the amphitheatre.” Indeed, speakers to this day frequently find the Forum’s natural acoustics preferable to amplified sound.

The architects were William Gehron and Sidney F. Ross, who also were commissioned to design the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Bridge and the Finance Building. Gehron and Ross faithfully carried out the original Capitol Complex master plan of architect Arnold Brunner, although it was their idea to give the Forum its semicircular shape. The graceful curve of the limestone exterior is considered a rarity among buildings of this size.

Much as the Capitol Building’s artwork pays tribute to the ideals of freedom and democracy, the Education Building (renamed the Forum Building when the Department of Education moved to new quarters in 1979) is a veritable record of the man’s accumulated knowledge. Called upon to execute this theme on the building’s massive bronze doors, sculptor Lee Lawrie has brilliantly depicted, in two categories, “the things which man has learned to do.” On the three sets of doors on the north facade, he has depicted the history of man’s industries. On the south facade, the 22 doors leading to the Forum depict man’s “creative and recreative occupations.”

The vestibule and lobby leading from the building’s north entrance conduct the searcher for knowledge into the State Library to the west and the State Law Library to the east. From the vestibule, paneled in dark Formosa marble, the visitor passes through three broad “gates of learning” sculpted by C. Paul Jennewein and Harry Kreis. These depict the arts and sciences by which man has discovered what he knows from the universe around him. Beneath these striking carvings are chiseled the names of great thinkers and cosmic philosophers from Hipparchus to Einstein.

The massive lobby, with polished walls of dark purple-grey marble, evokes an atmosphere that is distinctly that of ancient Egypt. The beamed ceiling is richly ornamented in geometric designs and characters which are both ancient and contemporary. Looking closely, one sees everything from primitive astronomers to tennis players, and from domesticated elephants

to electric trains, all brilliantly painted directly on the concrete ceiling by artist Vincent Maragliotti.

Other splashes of stylization and artistry, all roughly sharing an educational theme, crop up throughout the building. However, no room in the building, or for that matter anywhere in Pennsylvania, is so utterly overwhelming as the Forum itself. A patron arriving from Walnut Street, if required to wait in line, is greeted by a thought-provoking quotation carved in stone above each entrance. Beneath the awning installed in 1982 to replace a long-lost original, one enters the lobby which is dominated by a highly ornate box-office crafted of red Numidian marble. The door handles in the shape of leaping antelopes are worthy of inspection, as is the ceiling sculpture depicting the Three Fates of Greek legend in low relief.

The auditorium itself, entered through crimson upholstered doors, has the effect of enveloping the attentive visitor in a visual encyclopedia of heaven and earth. Describing the facility in a 1932 publication, G.A. Stevens wrote, "In this Forum the Commonwealth has set up a vital instrument of public culture; the artists have made it a living monument to the advancement of man's education, designed to teach all who approach with open minds through the eloquence of its very walls, and to arouse and satisfy the craving for knowledge and beauty which is an inherent instinct of mankind."



*Forum walls depict world history*

The Forum's "eloquent" walls and dramatic ceiling were designed and painted by Eric Gugler and Ricard Brooks, who supervised some thirty assisting artists over a two-year period. Eminent historians and astronomers were consulted to ensure accuracy.

Around the back wall are seven maps, each 21 by 35 feet, illustrating the march of civilization from prehistoric times to World War I. Oriental history begins on the extreme east wall, while occidental history begins on the west. Alternating between the maps are chronological tables containing more than 30,000 words. The progression from both sides meets at the center, whose map depicts the entire modern world, symbolically unified as a single global community.

*(continued on page 8)*





## Theodore Lettvin

Theodore Lettvin has performed with virtually all the world's major orchestras to the critical acclaim of leading newspapers, among which the Washington Post described him as "one of the three or four great pianists of the world."

The Chicago native made his orchestral debut at the age of eleven with the Chicago Symphony. His training then brought him to Philadelphia where he studied at Curtis Institute with Rudolph Serkin during which time he was the outstanding young prizewinner of various international contests. (He notes that he did not come from a musical family.)

After enlistment in the U.S. Navy failed to take him to exotic and distant parts, Mr. Lettvin subsequently "saw the world" on the international concert circuit, performing throughout Europe, Africa and the Americas. For many years while concertizing he was affiliated with the New England Conservatory. At present, Mr. Lettvin directs the doctoral program in piano performance at the University of Michigan.

The demand for his talents is illustrated by a story Mr. Lettvin recounts of being booked by his manager, for reasons unknown, simultaneously at two disparate locations in the Colorado Rockies. Changing one concert to a matinee, he hired a Piper Cub to shorten the journey between Boulder and Glenwood Springs. In the oxygen-lean atmosphere atop the continental divide, a loss of manifold pressure forced the plane precariously low, where iron ore deposits in the mountain began to demagnetize the compass, further threatening the completion of the flight. Prevented from arriving in daylight as planned, the Lettvin party was spared the tumult of a landing in darkness when, deep in their canyon destination, the tiny landing strip was surrounded by the automobiles of townsfolk who flashed their headlights to enable the plane to find the airfield between the snowcapped ranges. Uninjured but not unshaken, Mr. Lettvin that day satisfied two audiences as well as all remaining personal curiosity as to a bird's-eye blindfold view of the Rockies.

No such perils threatened Ted Lettvin's previous visits to Harrisburg, where his appearances have always been well received. He was presented on the Forum stage as a guest performer with the Harrisburg Symphony on three occasions, most recently in October 1979. In addition, he served as music director for two series of concerts for the Glen Allen Cultural Association in June 1982 and June 1983.



# Celebrate the Forum Inaugural Piano Recital

## PROGRAM

Tuesday Evening, September 23, 1986  
8:00 p.m.

### THEODORE LETTVIN

#### Piano

Toccata, Op. 11

Sergei Prokofiev  
(1891 - 1953)

Impromptu No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 90

Franz Schubert  
(1797 - 1828)

Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57  
("Appassionata")

Ludwig Van Beethoven  
(1770 - 1827)

Allegro assai

Andante con molto

Allegro ma non troppo

#### Intermission

Four Ballades

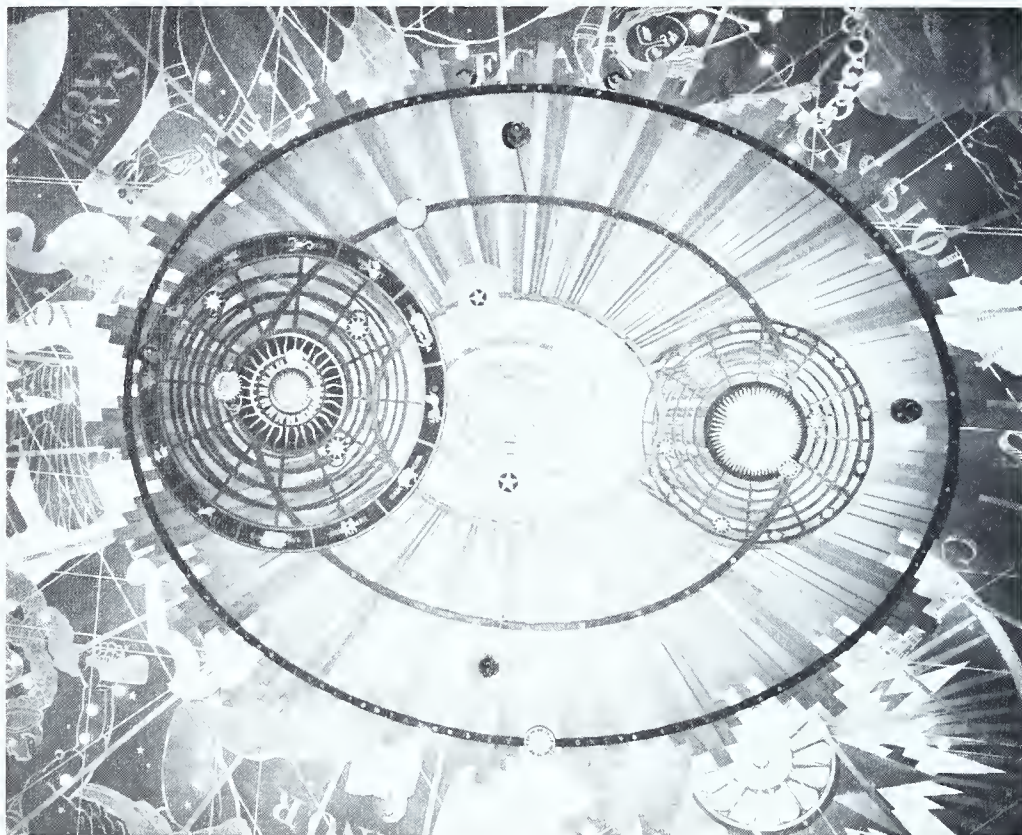
Frederic Chopin  
(1810 - 1849)

Premiere Ballade in G Minor, Op. 23

Deuxieme Ballade in F Major, Op. 38

Troiseme Ballade in A<sup>b</sup> Major, Op. 47

Quatrieme Ballade in F Minor, Op. 52

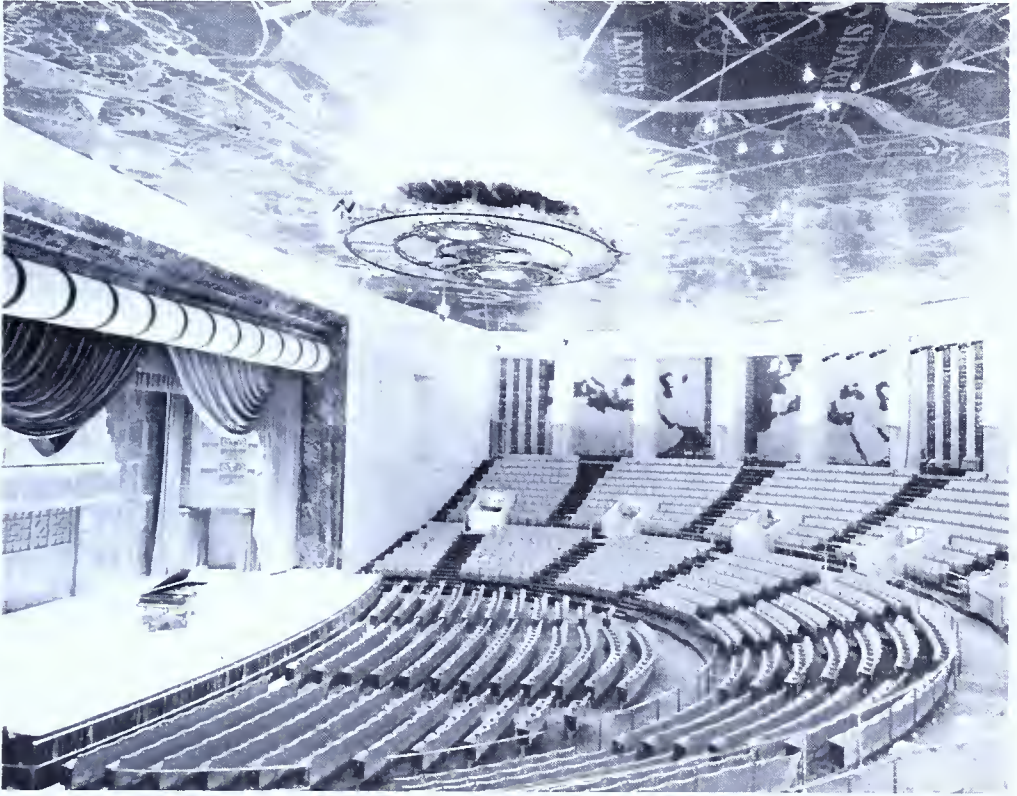


*Suspended "Sunburst" shows three solar systems*

Even more spectacular than the walls is the Forum ceiling, "an effort," according to a modest comment by the artists, "to achieve some idea of the grandeur of the heavens." More than one thousand stars are depicted in their proper positions. Of these, 365 are illuminated according to their actual levels of brilliance. The various constellations and the entire zodiacal band are brilliantly and clearly drawn on an enormous scale, Virgo being nearly 50 feet long.

Cleverly concealing the Forum's central ventilation shaft, one of the most unusual chandeliers ever designed is suspended some 60 feet above the Forum floor. Called the "Sunburst" because of the silver rays emanating from its center, it is actually a sculptural depiction of the three theories of the solar system. These are: the Ptolemaic, which in the second century held that the sun and planets revolved around the earth; the Copernican, in which the 16th century Polish astronomer correctly placed the sun at the center; and the Keplerian, the perfected model by Johann Kepler who determined that the planetary orbits were elliptical rather than round. It is interesting to note that the eighth and outermost orbit, which is allotted to the planet Neptune, contains an engraved reference by the artists to the "new" planet discovered in 1930, Pluto, whose orbital dimension was still uncalculated when the Forum was built.

Artist Gugler, who also designed the lighting for Grand Central Station, had just installed his Sunburst masterpiece when a devastating fire on October 3, 1930, sent it crashing to the floor in a ruin of plaster and metal. The fire, reportedly caused by spontaneous combustion of scrapings of Chinese wood oil but believed by some to have been arson, caused \$1 million in damages. Even the Levanto Italian and white Botticini marble was cracked by the excessive heat. Fortunately, the ceiling murals, scheduled for shipment from New York the day of the blaze, were spared. During the next 13 months all was restored or replaced. "When the Forum was dedicated on November 4, 1931," columnist Paul Beers wrote some time later, "it received more national attention for its artistry than any other Harrisburg area building, including the Capitol itself."



*All 1821 seats have unobstructed view*

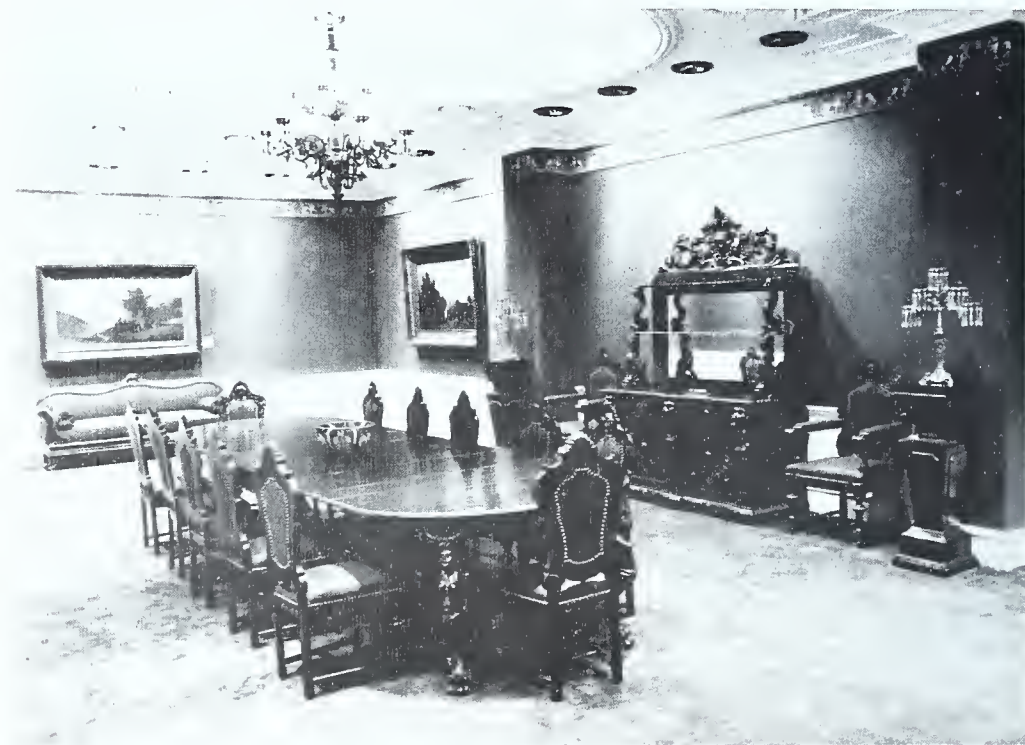
The Forum's stage, intentionally shallow to enhance the accoustics for public speaking, was equipped with the latest sound, lighting, and motion-picture equipment of its day. The motorized curtains, originally black velvet, could be adjusted to numerous decorative positions. However, few changes occurred until 1968, when the 3,678-pipe Moller organ was installed. Modifications were made to the Circassian walnut stage panelling to accommodate the pipes. A few years later, new carpeting and seating were installed, establishing the capacity at 1,821 permanent seats.



Still, as the Forum's 50th birthday approached, the stately old facility, like many of its contemporaries, was clearly outmoded, overheated and underutilized. As a subscriber to most events, Secretary of General Services Walter Baran overheard such complaints with increasing frequency. To overcome these problems and to chart the Forum's future, in 1979 Secretary Baran established the Forum Advisory Committee, consisting of a dozen representatives of local arts organizations and other Forum users.

Under the committee's guidance, full-time professional management was established (with a net staff reduction) and physical improvements were designed. In short order, the new awning was erected over the entrance, reawakening the Forum's downtown identity. By 1983, other renovations were instituted including modern air conditioning, handicapped accessibility, new sound, lighting and recording equipment, enlarged dressing rooms and other backstage facilities, and a removable stage extension to provide adequate elbow room for full orchestra arrangements.

Meanwhile, it was in early 1982 that an appearance by Maestro Eugene Ormandy underscored the embarrassing need for adequate guest artist facilities. After a backstage photo session with the Maestro amid steampipes and firehoses, Governor Dick Thornburgh proposed the idea of developing a "green room." Both Dick and Ginny Thornburgh were very active in the project, and it was Ginny who sought and obtained private funds to furnish the room. Designed by Lancaster architect Thomas Gilbert and Pittsburgh interior consultant Ann Center, the Green Room features a rich emerald



*Museum antiques grace the Green Room*

color scheme and dramatic classical details. It is furnished with historic paintings and antiques from the State Museum collection, and is flanked by two private dressing rooms suitable for the world-famous personalities who frequently appear on the Forum stage. In addition to its service during Forum events, the Green Room has proven highly functional for cabinet meetings and a great number of other government activities.

Today, as the Forum enters its 55th season, it looks forward to perhaps its greatest moments while reflecting on the seemingly unsurpassable events of its colorful past. Marcella T. Emerick, a Forum Advisory Committee member and author of the Wednesday Club's centennial history, has perhaps the most complete compendium of Forum "hi-notes," many of which are included in the following partial list of famous guest performers and speakers.

### **Notable personalities who have appeared at the Forum**

Jack Anderson  
Marian Anderson  
Isaac Asimov  
Julian Bond  
Art Buchwald  
William F. Buckley  
Captain Kangaroo  
George Carlin  
Nelson Eddy  
Geraldine Ferarro  
Arthur Fiedler and Boston Pops  
Eugene Fodor  
Virgil Fox  
Gloria Gaynor  
Martha Graham  
Skitch Henderson  
Jascha Heifetz  
Marilyn Horne  
José Iturbi  
The Juilliard String Quartet  
Lotte Lehman  
Oscar Levant  
Chuck Mangione  
Mitch Miller  
Melba Moore  
Ralph Nader  
Peter Nero

Eugene Ormandy and  
Philadelphia Orchestra  
Luciano Pavarotti  
Itzhak Perlman  
Roberta Peters  
Ezio Pinza  
Andre Previn and  
Pittsburgh Symphony  
Vincent Price  
Psychedelic Furs  
Sergei Rachmaninoff  
Tony Randall  
Artur Rubinstein  
William Steinberg and  
Pittsburgh Symphony  
Steppenwolf  
Isaac Stern  
Stephen Stills  
George Szell and  
Cleveland Orchestra  
Michael Tilson Thomas and  
Buffalo Philharmonic  
Trapp Family Singers  
Vienna Choir Boys  
Fred Waring  
Andre Watts  
Efrem Zimbalist

# FORUM CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

Dick & Ginny Thornburgh, Honorary Co-Chairmen

Walter & Irene Baran

John & Beth Neidel

Co-Chairmen

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Senator & Mrs. Edward P. Zemprelli

*Publicity courtesy of Auchincloss & Auchincloss*

*Box lunches at Mr. Conger's lecture were provided courtesy of Homestead Savings Association.*



## Clement E. Conger



Clement E. Conger of Alexandria, Virginia, has been Curator of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, U.S. Department of State since 1961. Having joined the State Department in 1947, he was serving as Deputy Chief of Protocol (1957-1961) when he recommended the inclusion of official reception rooms in the new State Department building. He initiated the program of securing prestige furnishings for the rooms by gifts and loans, ultimately bringing about the complete rebuilding of various contemporary-style rooms in

painstakingly accurate Early American detail, a program which is continuing.

After 25 years, the collection of fine period American furniture, historic American paintings and decorative arts in these rooms is valued at more than \$30,000,000. The collection of American period furniture of the 18th and early 19th centuries is acknowledged to be the most important in the Washington area and fifth greatest in the nation.

Mr. Conger directed this program in his "spare time" until 1970 during which he held other full-time State Department duties, including a second tour as Deputy Protocol Chief (1969-1970). He also served as Curator of the White House from 1970 to 1986 and Curator of Blair House since 1976.

### An Opportunity to view the Americana Collection

During intermission this evening, several members of the audience will be selected to participate in a V.I.P. tour of the diplomatic reception rooms at the U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. Names will be drawn from among cards filled out for the purchase of concert tickets. The tour will be prescheduled and will include same-day round-trip transportation from Harrisburg.

